

I-15 Environmental Study

Project # IM-0005(138)

Key # 9000

First Public Open House Summary

Meeting Date, Time and Location

April 4, 2005 (4-7:00 p.m.) – Tyhee Elementary School, Chubbuck, ID

Staff Attendance

Mark Snyder (ITD D5)

Blake Rindlisbacher (ITD D5)

Judy Harmon (ITD D5)

Scott Ellsworth (CH2M)

Jonathan Mathews (CH2M)

Dana Weiss (CH2M)

Jeannie Acutanza (CH2M)

Lynda Friesz-Martin (LFPR)

Brandon Coates (LFPR)

Idaho Transportation Department District 5 (ITD D5) CH2M Hill (CH2M)

Lynda Friesz Public Relations (LFPR)

Meeting Attendance

A total of 169 people attended the open house meeting.

Meeting Overview

A Public Open House Meeting was held April 4, 2005 at Tyhee Elementary School, 12743 W. Tyhee Road in Chubbuck, Idaho. The purpose of the meeting was to serve as part of the formal NEPA scoping process, gather public input and identify issues concerning possible interstate access and congestion improvements in the northern Pocatello and Chubbuck Area.

Several project displays were set up to provide project information to the public and to gather their input. Displays providing information included: welcome, project purpose, environmental process, interchange justification process, preliminary concepts and concepts carried forward in the process. A project issues display was set up to gather public input and identify project issues. The five concepts carried forward to the meeting were: Concept 11 (Chubbuck Road), Concept 16 (Chubbuck Road), Concept 12c (Tyhee/2 ½ Mile Road), Concept 13 (Tyhee Road) and Concept 14 (Siphon Road). Concepts not carried forward were also displayed at the meeting. Most of the public comments collected were regarding the five concepts carried forward.

Open House Meeting Public Involvement Schedule

March 17, 2005	Postcard mailed to stakeholders announcing open house meeting time and location
March 20, 2005	Newspaper ad appeared in the Idaho State Journal announcing the open house meeting time and location
March 27, 2005	Newspaper ad appeared in the Idaho State Journal announcing the open house meeting time and location
March 28, 2005	Brochure mailed to stakeholders announcing open house meeting time and location, and providing information about the project
April 3, 2005	Newspaper ad appeared in the Idaho State Journal announcing the open house meeting time and location

April 4, 2005 Open House Public Meeting held at Tyhee Elementary School in Chubbuck, Idaho

April 25, 2005 Public comment period ended

Project Mailings, Meeting Announcements and the Stakeholder List

Project mailings were distributed to stakeholders near the project area through a zip-code mail drop in the Pocatello and Chubbuck area. The zip-code mailing list was combined with the project stakeholder list which included city, county and state officials, state and federal agencies, interested citizens, media and previous stakeholders from the Chubbuck to Pocatello Creek project. The stakeholder list grows throughout the project as additional stakeholders request to be included and property owners are identified. A total of ninety-six (96) stakeholders from the stakeholder list were included in the mailings.

Both a postcard and a brochure were distributed to stakeholders prior to the open house meeting. The postcard was mailed out to a larger number of stakeholders than the brochure because it was less expensive to produce. A total of 6,960 addresses were included in the postcard mailing. The brochure was mailed out to 3,121 addresses.

March 2005 Postcard Mailing Total	6,960
March 2005 Brochure Mailing Total	3,121

Newspaper Advertisements and Press Releases

Newspaper advertisements announcing the open house meeting time and location were placed in the Idaho State Journal three (3) consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting. The Idaho Transportation Department's Public Affairs Office distributed a press release to the local media outlets in Pocatello/Chubbuck area encouraging participation at the meeting and media coverage.

Summary of Written Comments

Comments were collected from March 17, 2005 through April 25, 2005. Twenty – one (21) written comment forms regarding the project were collected at the open house. All of the comments received through regular mail, via e-mail and telephone conversations are included in this summary. A total of fifty (50) stakeholders submitted comments. Numerous comments, issues and concerns regarding the project were expressed in each comment form. The following bullet points highlight the public's various comments, issues and concerns.

Summarized Comments, Issues and Concerns about the Project

Concept 12c

- makes the most economic sense
- represents the most forward thinking possibility of the choices
- too far north to be useable by the Chubbuck area
- too far north to aid in current or mid-term traffic problems
- too far out from the city core and would push development too far beyond the current capacity of the city infrastructure
- does not ease the pressure at Pocatello Creek
- traffic traveling south on US 91 with the intent to access I-15 southbound, will not want to go 2 ½ Mile Road
- traffic traveling north on US 91 intent on accessing I-15 northbound will likely use the Ft. Hall Interchange
- this area is outside of both Pocatello and Chubbuck's area of impact (urban service boundaries) the zoning that the county implements in this area may not be in line with the city that eventually does gain the area within its city limits
- Pocatello and Bannock County would have to extend Olympus 2 to 2 1/2 miles north to gain any benefit

Concept 13

- would solve the problem and is least invasive, least costly, least dangerous and would have the fewest construction delays
- would help in the long term and would help development grow in that direction
- good choice because it's strategically located for future growth
- could be a reasonable alternative to Siphon but without a connection to Bench Road, there is little value to Pocatello residents of the Highland area
- if Bench Road could be connected into this interchange, it would be the best option
- the area is not yet built up and would be easier to build with more options for wider roads
- will have the most environmental problems but in the long run will be the best for the state and community as it will eventually be needed
- too far north to be useable by the Chubbuck area
- too far down the interstate to help any present concerns
- would not serve the area in the near term
- does not address current traffic flow
- this area is outside of both Pocatello and Chubbuck's area of impact (urban service boundaries) the zoning that the county implements in this area may not be in line with the city that eventually does gain the area within its city limits
- Pocatello and Bannock County would have to extend Olympus 2 to 2 1/2 miles north to gain any benefit

Concept 14

- the area is not yet built up and would be easier to build with more options for wider roads
- provides a second access to the freeway for those living to the north, but is much less complicated and costly
- most direct for the high-traffic areas
- would offer easy access to the industrial park on Siphon Road
- would center on future development for the next 20 – 30 years
- the greatest good for the greatest number of people for the foreseeable future
- this area is poised for development and will soon be in much greater need of freeway access than is currently demanded
- allows both cities to plan and manage the growth that is likely to occur in the area of the interchange
- mid and long term, an interchange in that area will help traffic and create business opportunities along the new Siphon Road and Highway 91
- would serve not only the present city well, but also serve the developing city well into the future
- current residential areas are minimally impacted, allowing local government to plan their zoning and addresses many present and future needs
- as Chubbuck continues to grow Siphon will become a key street to move traffic
- as the Pocatello east bench continues to grow an eventual connecting road over to Siphon interchange would provide an ideal alternative for traffic now using Olympus Drive and Pocatello Creek
- would be a major arterial into Power County and would save road expense revenues
- would service acres of light industrial ground on Siphon Road and Yellowstone Hwy
- would be better for dispersing traffic both westbound and north on Siphon Road
- provides access to the bench, which is a major plus now and will become a huge issue in the near future (10 – 20 years)
- allows access to relieve pressure from Siphon Road area and also accommodates traffic from the Highland district
- best for moving the Highland Hill traffic to the I-15 freeway
- would provide needed access for much of the Highland area as well as the western Chubbuck and Tyhee area
- modify the Bench Road access up the hill above future houses
- may be the best except that the main source of irrigation water for the Tyhee/Chubbuck area travels in a Siphon under Siphon Road from Hilina to the Hawthorne Road
- good to see this would connect into Bench Road
- the extension of Siphon Road and Olympus Drive, one east-west and one north-south arterial road will be gained which will greatly increase effective traffic flow in northern Bannock County
- Siphon Road would need to be eventually widened to accommodate the additional traffic as the areas grow

- the connection road could be moved a 100 yards or so north of the school and miss it and the canal
- does nothing to ease the pressure at Pocatello Creek
- does not help very many people, ruins good farmland and directs development towards unnecessary geographical areas
- rebuilding the Siphon Canal would be too high in cost along with dealing with Fort Hall Water District
- Hilina Road cannot handle the traffic and has canal issues
- Ellis Elementary is within one mile of where the exit would be located
- will bring more traffic near Ellis Elementary School

Concept 11 and 16

- 25 years from now another interchange at either 2 ½ Mile or Siphon will be necessary but certainly not today, put the interchange at Chubbuck
- Concept 16 serves not only needs at the present but also in the future
- the traffic warrants putting in an interchange at Chubbuck Road
- the overpass is in a dilapidated condition and in need of replacement
- would help to alleviate congestion on Chubbuck Road and Olympus Drive
- I like the idea of having a crossover from Chubbuck Road directly to Olympus Drive, due to the heavy flow of school traffic in the mornings
- will alleviate congestion based on where actual people are now
- help to alleviate future congestion on the Highland benches as development progresses
- Concept 16 would relieve some of the pressure from Pocatello Creek Exit
- alleviates congestion on Pocatello Creek exit/on-ramp and Mount Olympus during peak hours
- would do the most for traffic congestion in the medium term
- accesses to existing features of the community are enhanced
- would be convenient for those of us who work closer to town
- will present the quickest and safest ways “in/out” while disrupting the minimum on local roads
- Chubbuck Road is already a natural corridor for business
- either option allows for and promotes logical development of our community
- the City of Chubbuck has built on the south side of the Chubbuck Road Exit which would preclude using it for an exit-on-ramp, the only thing left would be a “B” type exit and on-ramp on the north side of Chubbuck Road (Concept 16 modified)
- safety is improved by the options that address issues at the flying “Y” interchange
- increase the speed limit on Chubbuck Road to 40 mph or 35 mph
- seems very cumbersome to me and thus less cost effective
- more dangerous and will demand more maintenance costs
- would be too costly
- will impact homes along Chubbuck Road and in the Hartland Subdivision
- appears to be very costly considering the proximity to the I-15/I-86 interchange and the necessity to improve East Chubbuck Road to a level necessary to carry the traffic
- unrealistic option for two reasons: 1) proximity to the Flying “Y” and 2) Chubbuck Road and the intersection at Yellowstone Ave. is already congested
- we would have the same congestion problems in Chubbuck and north without any remedy taking place
- would further congest traffic
- the connecting streets are convoluted and awkward
- Chubbuck Road is not capable of handling additional traffic without being reconstructed from I-15 to US 91; reconstruction would cost the taxpayers far too much in right-of-way acquisition costs
- East Chubbuck Road cannot and will not handle the traffic and will have to be widened later at a great cost to the City of Chubbuck and the taxpayers of Chubbuck, Idaho
- does not give people enough time to sort out all the lane-swapping that happens around the I-15/I-86 interchange and accidents will happen
- the type of interchanges pictured are unsafe and increase the accident rates
- there is minimal advantage for the people traveling south on US 91 and heading to I-15
- ties into the existing infrastructure the best, however, it will simply relocate the problem from Yellowstone Avenue to Chubbuck road which is less capable of handling additional traffic and will be difficult and costly to expand.

- routes a lot of traffic through a significant residential area
- benefits of this option are short-term rather than long-term.

Other Interchange Locations

- would like to see a new interchange off of Reservation Road
- No Build Alternative is not an option
- build 2 new interchanges; one at Siphon Road (14) and one at 2 ½ Mile Road (12a)
- consider an access near Quinn (Road) to provide an alternative for west side development to access I-15 north without driving across the county through increasingly more residential growth and congestion
- an exit off of I-15 would be most beneficial if it would attract traffic going into the “Northern Highland Residential” areas as well as the current subdivisions in Chubbuck. If the exit is too far north many people will not take the time to travel a few miles out of their way. With this in mind I would recommend the exit be somewhere between Chubbuck Road and Siphon. The key is to have a road that then travels South back to Chubbuck Rd. and/or Bench Road as well as west into the Chubbuck/Tyhee areas. A frontage road might be a possibility to appease current property owners

Other Comments

- travel north of I-86 is certainly problematic with the current level of traffic on US 91
- convince Pocatello to do a little work on the infrastructure of roads to relieve the pressure on Hilene Road and Yellowstone Avenue
- my main concern is traffic on Hilene Road between 2 ½ Mile and Pocatello
- the I-86 exit in to Chubbuck (Yellowstone Avenue), heading west, needs a lane improvement like previously done to exit I-15 north on to Pocatello Creek
- something definitely needs to be done
- the area is really growing and warrants a change
- please do something, the current access on Yellowstone Avenue is already bad and will only get worse
- it cost as much or more to rebuild or widen overpasses as it would to build new ones
- look at a wide range of solutions such as mass transit
- a toll on the roads would help handle traffic and also help pay for the roads
- the options that only allow access to undeveloped areas are not attractive
- proposed zoning plans appear to promote a specific option that may cause sprawl
- zoning will follow freeway access; future development should balance access, safety and area wide development, and not pit one community against another
- whatever option is selected should move forward rapidly as development around the Chubbuck Interchange options is already encroaching on some of the proposals
- the current Chubbuck Road overpass needs rebuilding w/pedestrian and bike lane
- create a simple design, avoid established, open space/rural residential developments, locate where current and future highest density development will occur
- City of Chubbuck required 80ft of right-of-way when the Northside Plaza plat was filed
- build for needs today and you'll help ease problems tomorrow
- as far as safety is concerned, you should plan for the lowest common denominator
- improvements should be made at the intersection of Tyhee Road and US 91
- modify the intersection of Reservation Road and US 91
- Hilene Road needs to be widened
- study the areas for evidence of historic or prehistoric sites
- another exit on I-86 onto Philbin Road will need to be considered in the distant future
- a turn-off on Hilene Road, south of Chubbuck Road serving the road-way to the Pheasant Ridge town homes is needed
- need an east bound turning lane when traveling north on US 91 turning onto Chubbuck Road, a large percentage of traffic uses Chubbuck Road to drive home to the Highland areas causing traffic to backup at a red light
- natural environmental resources have already been impacted and therefore should not be considered beyond a possible listing. Our needs are more important than the few insects which may be impacted